A Shared Global Agenda to Fight Alzheimer’s Disease:
Addressing the Barriers to Innovation

Workshop
Lausanne, Switzerland – There is currently no cure for Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. The main barriers to the development of effective treatments for Alzheimer’s disease are an incomplete understanding of the disease, fragmented resources, and challenges with the design and implementation of clinical trials. Experts gathered at a two day meeting in Lausanne to discuss future steps to address dwindling product pipelines and to increase the productivity of drug development processes.

Alzheimer’s disease is an increasing challenge. As our global population ages, the prevalence of the disease will skyrocket. By 2050, experts estimate that 135 million people around the world
will live with Alzheimer’s and the largest impact will be felt in low and-middle income countries.

At the workshop of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), entitled “Enhancing Translational Research and Clinical Development in Alzheimer’s Disease and other Dementia: The Way Forward,” hosted by The Swiss Government and in cooperation with The Global CEO Initiative on Alzheimer’s Disease (CEOi) and Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI), participants shared ideas on how to ramp up drug and diagnostics development. The goal is to accelerate the translation of innovative research into effective therapies for Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. Important opportunities include, for example, new clinical trial designs, a global clinical trial platform, and flexible regulatory processes. Treatment of early disease stages represents a cornerstone of current biomedical research and health innovation strategies.

The workshop is a follow-up event to the OECD Workshop on “Better Health through Biomedicine: Innovative Governance” that took place in Berlin, Germany in 2010.

“The OECD member states identified as key questions that need to be further addressed international collaboration towards more innovative research and adequate governance models to foster drug development. Neurodegenerative diseases and in particular Alzheimer’s Disease, which have become a major challenge for R&D and public health, are on the focus of the Lausanne workshop” stated Isabella Beretta, Chair of the OECD Working Party on Biotechnology and representative of the Swiss State Secretariat of Education, Research and Innovation.

Today’s meeting in Lausanne provided a unique opportunity for governments, international organisations, regulators, leading researchers, and the pharmaceutical industry to examine the challenges and opportunities and to encourage a move for greater innovation and collaboration. The output of the meeting will form the basis for a continuing dialogue among all stakeholders regarding the path forward in the development of safe and effective therapies to address this global unmet need. Plans for a follow-up meeting are currently underway.

“The meeting produced an important dialogue regarding the challenges we face as we all work together in the shared effort to identify a disease-modifying drug by 2025,” stated Dirk Pilat, Deputy Director, Directorate for Science, Technology & Innovation at the OECD. “OECD countries account for nearly half the global cases of dementia today and have a particular responsibility in accelerating efforts in the research, development and evaluation of innovative therapies and diagnostics.”

“This meeting is historic. It’s the first time that regulators, industry, scientists and patient advocates have gathered globally to tackle Alzheimer’s and dementia. We need more of these collaborations, reminiscent of HIV/AIDS meetings in the 1980s, if we are going to find a cure or prevention,” said George Vradenburg, Convener of the CEOi. “Regulatory agencies across the globe are our partners in this fight and innovative regulatory models are needed to ensure that we can help those living with Alzheimer’s disease today and stop the disease for future generations.”
“If we speed up the drug development process by one year potentially 8 million more people with dementia will have access to a new treatment,” said Marc Wortmann, Executive Director of Alzheimer’s Disease International. “One of the things we can do is engage people living with dementia and their care partners more into the process and learn from them how to make research participation more dementia-friendly. That will bring more people into the trials.”

“Dementia is a healthcare policy challenge and Switzerland has approved a National Dementia Strategy 2014-2017,” said Tania Dussey-Cavassini, Ambassador for Global Health, Vice-Director General of Swiss Federal Office of Public Health. “Switzerland is committed to work with national and international partners and industry and promoting collaboration in the fight against dementia,” added Isabella Beretta.

Innovation is shaped through conversation and the conversation here at this meeting continues us down the right path of stopping Alzheimer’s by 2025,” offered Dr. Dennis Gillings, World Dementia Envoy. “But if we don’t address the barriers in accelerating translation of innovation to therapies for patients we will not reach our goal.”

The meeting organisers and participants committed to continuing the dialogue and will reconvene to assess progress in a follow-up forum in 2015.

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The **OECD** is one of the world’s largest and most reliable sources of comparable statistical, economic and social data. It monitors trends, collects data, analyses and forecasts economic development and investigates evolving patterns in a broad range of public policy areas, including agriculture, development co-operation, education, employment, environment, taxation and trade, science, technology, industry and health. The combination of our global reach and ability to bring together government and non-government perspectives means we are in a unique position to help societies rise to the challenge.

The **State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation** SERI is the federal government's specialised agency for national and international matters concerning education, research and innovation policy. For more information visit www.sbfi.admin.ch

**ADI** is the international federation of 84 Alzheimer associations throughout the world. Each of our members is a non-profit Alzheimer association supporting people with dementia and their families. ADI was founded in 1984 and registered as a non-profit organisation in the USA. Based in London, ADI has been in official relations with the WHO since 1996 and has had consultative status with the UN since 2012.

ADI’s vision is an improved quality of life for people with dementia and their families throughout the world. ADI believes that the key to winning the fight against dementia lies in a unique combination of global solutions and local knowledge. As such, it works locally, by empowering Alzheimer associations to promote and offer care and support for people with dementia and their family carers, while working globally to focus attention on dementia and campaign for policy change from governments. For more information, visit www.alz.co.uk
The Global CEO Initiative on Alzheimer’s Disease (CEOi) is a patient-powered industry coalition of private-sector leaders who have joined together to provide business leadership in the fight against Alzheimer’s. The CEO Initiative seeks to partner with public leaders to transform the disease from a social, health, and economic crisis into an opportunity for healthy aging and innovation in research and care. In this era of aging populations, The CEO Initiative believes that it will take visionary, action-oriented leadership of public and private leaders working together to solve our greatest challenges. Learn more at: www.ceoalzheimersinitiative.org

The World Dementia Council. The creation of a World Dementia Council was one of the main commitments made at the G8 dementia summit in December 2013. The council aims to stimulate innovation, development and commercialisation of life enhancing drugs, treatments and care for people with dementia, or at risk of dementia, within a generation. It will do this by providing independent, non-governmental advocacy and global leadership. The views expressed by the council will be independent of any government and not representative of government policy. The World Dementia Council met for the first time on 30 April 2014. The council currently has 18 members, including the World Dementia Envoy Dr Dennis Gillings, who leads the council. Learn more at http://dementiachallenge.dh.gov.uk/about-the-council/